

# Mayweather to defend title in San Francisco

By Nancy Gay

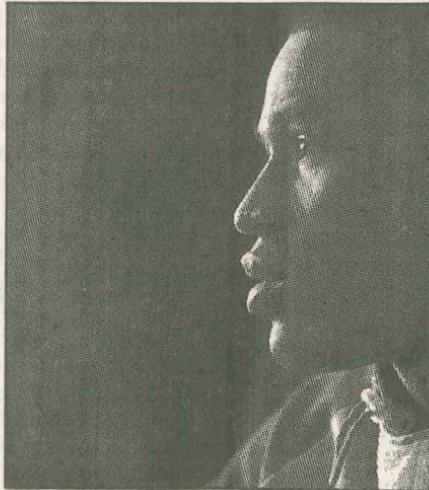
CHRONICLE STAFF WRITER

Now it can be told: Big-time boxing's return to San Francisco can be credited, in large part, to the throbbing pain in Floyd Mayweather's jaw.

No, that ache wasn't the aftermath of a stray Diego Corrales punch. Rather, the extraction of four impacted wisdom teeth that sidelined the reigning WBC super featherweight champion from tomorrow's scheduled bout against No. 1 challenger Jesus Chavez at the Paris Hotel in Las Vegas.

The dental surgery also put a world of hurt on "Pretty Boy" Mayweather's wallet, costing him his first opportunity at huge pay-per-view bucks. And rescheduling the fight would prove a lot easier said than done.

What happened since? The considerable downturn in Las Vegas tourism as a result of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks made Mayweather's latest title defense much less attractive to a city that has laid off over 20,000 hotel workers. Apart from the Nov. 17 Hasim Rahman-Lennox Lewis fight at the Mandalay Bay, boxing activity in Vegas has virtually ground to a halt.



CHRISTINA KOCI HERNANDEZ / *The Chronicle*

**Oral surgery postponed Floyd Mayweather's bout with Jesus Chavez, originally slated for tomorrow.**

The beneficiary is San Francisco, which now will play host to Mayweather's rescheduled WBC title defense against Chavez on Nov. 10 at the Bill Graham Civic Auditorium. HBO will televise the fight.

"For years, the pay-per-view numbers in the Bay Area have been outstanding,

for the most part because there is such a large Hispanic population here. San Francisco has proved it supports big-time boxing," said Bob Arum, Mayweather's promoter, who was in town yesterday with his fighter to formally announce the Nov. 10 card.

Mayweather (26-0, 19 knockouts), back in form physically and apparently willing to continue fighting at 130 pounds despite his repeated objections to staying at that weight, spoke at length yesterday about his love for the city and his eagerness to fight here.

Though he tried hard to remain low-key, the tempestuous Mayweather was quickly riled when Chavez — bellowing via speakerphone from Austin, Texas — attacked the champion's reputation in the ring.

"I still think that Floyd is overrated, and I'm willing to let people know that it's absolutely true, what I've been saying," said Chavez (35-1, 24 KOs), the WBC's mandatory No. 1 challenger since 1998 whose problems with the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service have kept him out of the country the past three years.

Setup or not, Mayweather was sufficiently infuriated.

"He just did the same thing Diego Corrales did," Mayweather, 24, grumbled, "and when you talk too much pain, you're gonna pay. Dearly, he's gonna pay."

If that's the case, chalk up another bonus for the Bay Area boxing fan. Arum said he hadn't seen the kind of animosity Corrales and Mayweather carried into their Jan. 20 fight in Las Vegas since Marvin Hagler tangled with Thomas Hearns nearly two decades ago.

Mayweather channeled that anger into a 10th-round TKO of Corrales, scoring three knockdowns in the 7th round and two in the 10th. And he promises to bring that same intensity to his fight next month against the chatty Chavez.

"The best thing he can do for himself right now is stop running his mouth," Mayweather said.

Arum and San Francisco-based Peter Howes, who are co-promoting the event, said at least 3,100 of the 7,000 seats will be priced for general admission at \$30. Other ticket prices will range from \$50-\$100, and can be purchased through City Box Office at (415) 392-4400 or Tickets.com. For more information, log onto [www.fighttribe.com](http://www.fighttribe.com).